

CLAIMS:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computerized method for managing report information usable by a plurality of users including users under independent business entities, at least some of the users responsible for advancing through one or more design stages at least one component design for a respective component of a machine, the method comprising:

5 configuring a user-interface device to request initialization of a component design report for tracking a respective component design, said request including information indicative of a site coordinator responsible for coordinating the requested component design among a plurality of users responsible for conducting said component design, said request further including information indicative of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design;

10 transmitting the request to a data center over a communications network;

 providing a database configured to store the request transmitted to the data center, the database further configured to store a plurality of business rules associated with the respective component design;

15 processing the request relative to the business rules in the database to post each component design report to users responsible for performing tasks for advancing the component design through at least one of the design stages;

 providing an input/output device configured to provide access to said database to each user responsible for performing a given task to retrieve at least one design item requiring disposition and approval prior to proceeding to a next design stage, said at least one design item selected from the group consisting of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design, said device further configured to gather data indicative of component measurements and comments regarding disposition of said at least one design item; and

20 generating a code indicative of a level of approval, or lack thereof, for said at least one design item in view of the gathered data so that in the event approval is granted, the component design can be advanced to the next design stage, and, in the event approval is denied, corrective actions are identified to remove any design deviations and obtain any required approval prior to advancing to the next design stage.

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2. The computerized method of claim 1 further comprising populating the database with previously performed component design reports for each respective component of the machine.

5 3. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein the user-interface device includes a data field configurable for conducting a report search based on one or more search parameters, with at least one of said search parameters selected from the group consisting of report initiator, site coordinator, component name, drawing number, report number, machine type, present status of report, supplier of the component, any user identified as a point of contact for any given report, and site responsible for the component design.

10 4. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for electronically copying files from an existing report including component drawings and documentation usable for a new component 15 design report.

15 5. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a working list including each component 20 design report and associated tasks that require action from a respective user.

6. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a list indicative of the status of each respective component design report and tasks associated therewith.

7. A computerized system for managing report information usable by a plurality of users including users under independent business entities, at least some of the users responsible for advancing through one or more design stages at least one component design for a respective component of a machine, the system comprising:

5 a user-interface device configured to request initialization of a component design report for tracking a respective component design, said request including information indicative of a site coordinator responsible for coordinating the requested component design among a plurality of users responsible for conducting said component design, said request further including information indicative of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design, the user-interface device further configured to transmit the request to a data center over a communications network;

10 a database configured to store the request transmitted to the data center, the database further configured to store a plurality of business rules associated with the respective component design;

15 a processor configured to process the request relative to the business rules in the database to post each component design report to users responsible for performing tasks for advancing the component design through at least one of the design stages; and

20 an input/output device configured to provide access to said database to each user responsible for performing a given task to retrieve at least one design item requiring disposition and approval prior to proceeding to a next design stage, said at least one design item selected from the group consisting of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design, said device further configured to gather data indicative of component measurements and comments regarding disposition of said at least one design item; and

25 a code generator configured to generate a code indicative of a level of approval, or lack thereof, for said at least one design item in view of the gathered data so that in the event approval is granted, the component design can be advanced to the next design stage, and, in the event approval is denied, corrective actions are identified to remove any design deviations and obtain any required approval prior to advancing to the next design stage.

8. The computerized system of claim 7 wherein the database is populated with previously performed component design reports for each respective component of the machine.

5 9. The computerized system of claim 7 wherein the user-interface device includes a data field configurable for conducting a report search based on one or more search parameters, with at least one of said search parameters selected from the group consisting of report initiator, site coordinator, component name, drawing number, report number, machine type, present status of report, supplier of the component, any user identified as a point of contact for any given report, and site responsible for the component design.

10 15 10. The computerized system of claim 7 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for electronically copying files from an existing report including component drawings and documentation usable for a new component design report.

20 11. The computerized system of claim 7 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a working list including each component design report and associated tasks that require action from a respective user.

12. The computerized system of claim 7 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a list indicative of the status of each respective component design report and tasks associated therewith.

13. A computer-readable medium including instructions for causing a computer to manage report information usable by a plurality of users by:

5 configuring a user-interface device to request initialization of a component design report for tracking a respective component design through a plurality of design stages, said request including information indicative of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design;

10 transmitting the request to a data center over a communications network;

15 configuring a database to store the request transmitted to the data center, the database further configured to store a plurality of business rules associated with the respective component design;

20 processing the request relative to the business rules in the database to post each component design report to users responsible for performing tasks for advancing the component design through at least one of the design stages;

25 configuring an input/output device to provide access to said database to each user responsible for performing a given task to retrieve at least one design-related item requiring disposition and approval prior to proceeding to a next design stage, said at least one item selected from the group consisting of component drawings and documentation applicable to the component design, said device further configured to gather data indicative of component measurements and comments regarding disposition of said at least one design item; and

30 generating a code indicative of a level of approval, or lack thereof, for said at least one design item in view of the gathered data so that in the event approval is granted, the component design can be advanced to the next design stage, and, in the event approval is denied, corrective actions are identified to remove any design deviations and obtain any required approval prior to advancing to the next design stage.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 further including instructions for configuring the database to be populated with previously performed component design reports for each respective component of the machine.

15. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the user-interface device includes a data field configurable for conducting a report search based on one or more search parameters, with at least one of said search parameters selected from the group consisting of report initiator, site coordinator, component name, drawing number, report number, machine type, present status of report, supplier of the component, any user identified as a point of contact for any given report, and site responsible for the component design.

10 16. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for electronically copying files from an existing report including component drawings and documentation usable for a new component design report.

15 17. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a working list including each component design report and associated tasks that require action from a respective user.

20 18. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the user-interface device includes a clickable icon for accessing a list indicative of the status of each respective component design report and tasks associated therewith.

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